

Saint Mary's College of California

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Sustainability Report

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12-2016

### 3rd Annual Sustainability Report

Saint Mary's College of California

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# 3rd Annual Sustainability Report

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December 2016





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# OUR VISION

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In fidelity to our educational mission and Catholic principles, Saint Mary's College is committed to leadership in fostering environmental literacy, modeling a culture of sustainability, and creating an equitable future for all of humankind in harmony with nature.

The animating vision of a more sustainable college cannot be achieved without considerable creativity, innovation, flexibility, and energy. To achieve our sustainability objectives, we must:

- Engage our community at all levels. Successful implementation of sustainability objectives will require the initiative to become a stated priority for the Board of Trustees and senior administrative leadership. Simultaneously, we must work to ensure the ethic of conservation permeates the larger community;

- Conduct a transparent evaluation and planning process that defines and weighs tradeoffs and sacrifices in a deliberate and conscientious fashion;

- Take full advantage of the College's substantial intellectual resources — our own students, staff, and faculty will generate some of the best solutions;

- Link our work to the Saint Mary's mission, recognizing that conducting our work and ourselves sustainably is consistent with the College's aims and ideals;

- Assign clear measures to institutional and individual accountability, ensuring that the progress toward our stated goals is regularly and accurately assessed and articulated to the community we aim to serve.



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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## Facilities Improvements

The foundation to a sustainable college can be found in how it operates. In 2016, Saint Mary's College retrofitted the Power Plant to up-to-date green building standards, helping reuse an existing building and modernize the building's water and energy use efficiencies. The additional space helped the campus reconfigure 85 offices, where furniture and equipment was repurposed and reused (saving the college ~\$255,000-\$498,000 and diverting nearly 84 tons of waste).

Significant improvements in waste reduction/diversion have been made by adding more recycling and compost bins and by providing education around campus and during events. This has resulted in an increase from 29% to 49% in diversion rates, saving the college nearly \$20,000

in landfill costs in 2016. Saint Mary's has also conducted several energy audits, helping us benchmark existing equipment. Ten hydration stations have been installed, providing an easy alternative to bottled water, and 20 bike racks have been added to campus in places of need. These actions are a direct consequence of our Sustainable Purchasing Policy and Campus Master Plan.

As 2017 approaches, we anticipate the implementation of a robust transportation demand management program, encouraging students and staff to find alternatives to a single-occupancy vehicle. Additionally, we expect to add solar powered electric vehicle charging stations and exterior lighting to the campus. These initiatives will provide our campus with better services, lower our carbon footprint, and reduce operating costs.

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**"Reducing our environmental impact and implementing cost-effective strategies are not mutually exclusive. With our campus facilities, a sustainable mindset has been and will continue to be an important lens through which we make decisions."**

**-Michael Viola, Facilities Services**

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## **STARS Silver**

In January 2016, Saint Mary's was awarded a STARS Silver rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of our advancements since our Bronze rating in August 2014.

Additionally, Saint Mary's was recognized as a Top Performer in AASHE's 2016 Sustainable Campus Index for Wellbeing and Work.

## Staff Initiatives

While students are the institution's primary focus, Saint Mary's employs over 990 staff and faculty who have a real impact on our footprint.

In 2016, a staff sustainability ambassadors program was initiated to educate and enable our staff to be sustainability champions. Over 20 have participated in its 1st year, learning about various topics (ex. energy, waste) while taking action at work and at home.

The effect of such a program as well as the monthly staff newsletter has enhanced our campus culture. As an example, 23 registered green events occurred this past academic year.

Furthermore, a Sustainable Purchasing Policy was signed on June 20, 2016 by the Cabinet and President for the purpose of purchasing "products with the highest environmental and social standards within its respective industry." Workshops and other educational outreach have and will continue to empower our staff to enact this policy.

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**"From taking the few extra steps to green our office workplace (compost!) to learning about pressing issues globally and locally, sustainability has lead to more intention in my every day work environment."**

**-Sarah Vital, Library**



Left to right: Carole Wolf, Wendy Urteaga, Sam Alberto, Sami Davidson, Ronda Levy, Cesar Ramos, Sarah Vital, Legacy Lee, Collin Pugh, John Schneider, Winnie Shamash, Luz Casquejo Johnston

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## Green Saves Green

Over the past year, Saint Mary's Sustainability raised over \$11,000 in funds and equipment while offsetting over \$20,000 in landfill waste removal through our diversion efforts. As the diversion processes and culture

continue to grow, this annual savings should increase as well.

Additionally, by streamlining the takeout program in Oliver Hall, Sodexo saved over \$30,000 in paper products. This, too, expects to be an annual savings.





# Student Initiatives

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## Student Voice

Students are a chief voice towards advancing sustainability at Saint Mary's. Three important developments occurred in 2016 to help build out student interest and work.

First, the Green Gaels became a chartered club, tallying 17 active members. The club has educated and engaged hundreds of students through events such as RecycleMania, Earth Week, and Campus Sustainability Week. This helped earn them the Student Organization of the Year.

Secondly, a Green Living Learning Community started its first cohort at Claeys South. The community takes a class on how to become a change agent while engaging their residence hall and campus on sustainable practices.

Thirdly, sustainability has employed six students this past



**Left to right: Kavya Maddali (VP), Raymond Marrokal-Boffman (Treas.), Claire Huebler (Pres.); not pictured: James Morris (Prog. Coord.), Akila Cuddalore (Sec.)**

year on sustainability projects in waste management, reuse, and food. This deepens the impact that sustainability can have at Saint Mary's while providing essential experiences and career skills for our students.



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"The sustainability efforts on campus have helped me and my fellow students understand the importance of protecting our planet. As a college dedicated to social justice, it is important that we create a green community that advocates for a sustainable lifestyle and an environmentally just world."

**-Kayla Martignetti, Sustainability Intern**

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A student shows off her reusable water bottle during the RecycleMania competition



This RecycleSmart award was a result of Sodexo's composting enhancements.



A student volunteer helps during move-out

## Campus Partners

Campus improvements and student success is a collaboration among many partners. Many thanks to:

-ABLE Janitorial Services  
-Admissions

-Advancement  
-Associated Students  
-Athletics  
-Business Office  
-CILSA  
-College Communications  
-Facilities Services

-Justice, Community & Leadership  
-Legacy Garden  
-Project Management  
-Sodexo Food Services  
-Student Life

## Sustainability Engagement

# 1,250+

students engaged in sustainability activities or programs

# 500+

Volunteer hours in support of sustainability

From their first day on campus during Weekend of Welcome to Senior Capstone projects, students left a considerable impact on our campus footprint and culture.

Educational events - such as lectures on food waste, panels on green careers, the One Planet Film Festival, and the Leadership for Social Justice Conference - provided students background on our communities' pressing issues.

More importantly, students organized around action. Green Monday and Food Recovery network are ongoing Oliver Hall efforts to promote a more plant-based diet and to save food from entering the waste stream, respectively. The Waste-Defense Team provided dozens of hours of education in the residence halls and at events on appropriate recycling, composting, and DIY (do it yourself) behaviors.

Students also led changes in how students move-in and out of residential halls. This resulted in over 20 tons diverted from the landfill through infrastructural and process improvements. During move-out, donations were secured for the first time, leading to the Weekend of Welcome Yard Sale and the creation of the Free Store.

The Yard Sale sold over 500 reusable items, destined for the landfill, raising over \$1,000 for sustainability programming. The Free store in its first semester has distributed over 300 reusable items to students, diverted tons of donations to local organizations, and provided hundreds of pounds of bedding to local animal shelters.

Additionally, sustainability continues to be a First Year Academic Cohort session, reaching over 100 students in its first full year. Several sustainability trainings are hosted yearly for student leaders, building capacity from within and when they graduate.



The Green Living Learning Community visits a local Recycling Facility.



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**"We - the Green Gaels - are working on shifting the campus to see that sustainability is more than just recycling and that it incorporates crucial principles including justice, politics, ethics, and lifestyle, to name a few. It gives me hope to see how well received our efforts have been by the campus community and how much change already is being made."**

**-Kavyasri Maddali, Green Gaels VP**

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# Moving Forward

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In accordance with the Strategic Plan's call to "raise the visibility of how the campus community can support sustainability efforts" (Goal 3C), we endeavor to build a culture of sustainability across our campus and curriculum.

Going forward, improvements in student engagement, staff involvement, operational processes, and institutional decision-making can be fulfilled through enhanced engagement and assessment. Green Space, a new student-led program that works with staff to reduce their office's eco-impact, is an example that builds capacity within our students, staff, and facilities.

In 2017, our emphasis will be in developing long-term action

plans on high-impact sustainability indicators. This includes developing a robust climate action plan, tied to future measurable targets, as well as plans for actively minimizing our water, land, transportation, and waste footprints.

Separate from our operations, we look to develop a long-term plan with how sustainability integrates with the academic experience, specifically through the creation of an academic center. To initiate these plans, we must be intentional in organizing support from stakeholders as well as providing a cost-neutral means for implementation.

- Riley Smith, Sustainability Coordinator

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Jane Camarillo (Chair)  
Riley Smith (Sust. Coord.)  
Prof. Aaron Sachs  
Prof. Alice Baldrige  
Bill Sullivan  
Collin Pugh  
Prof. Gemma Niermann  
Jacqueline Randazzo  
James Sciuto  
Jennifer Pigza  
Julie Welch

Kelli Barram  
Lance Hourany  
Prof. Linda Herkenhoff  
Prof. Manisha Anantharman  
Prof. Marie Pagliarni  
Marshall Welch  
Matt Carroll  
Michael Flood  
Prof. Michael Marchetti  
Roy Wensley  
Safa Toma

### Students:

Esha Naik  
Evelyn Rumsby  
Kavyasri Maddali  
Kelly Kellner  
Maggie Lettire  
Paula Dulce  
Raymond Marrokal-Boffman